Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

Monday, December 25, 2006
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Editor's Notes: The President was at Camp David, MD, on December 22, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

In the printed version of the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* for Monday, December 18, 2006, two Presidential determinations were inadvertently assigned incorrect numbers. The numbering is corrected as follows:

Presidential Determination on Sanctions Against North Korea for Detonation of a Nuclear Explosive Device, appearing on page 2147, is corrected to read "Presidential Determination No. 2007–07."

Memorandum on Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended, appearing on page 2162, is corrected to read "Presidential Determination No. 2007–08."

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, December 22, 2006

The President's Radio Address

December 16, 2006

Good morning. Christmas is fast approaching, and I know many of you are busy trying to finish up your holiday shopping. This week, we received good news about the economy that should brighten the season and keep us optimistic about the year ahead.

First, the Commerce Department released figures showing that sales for America's retailers were up in November and that the increase is much larger than expected. These figures are important because for many American businesses November and December are their highest sales months for the year. So the healthy increase in retail sales is a good sign for American employers and workers.

America's working families also received another bit of holiday cheer this week: We learned that real hourly wages rose by 2.3 percent over the past year. That may not sound like a lot, but for the typical family of four with both parents working, it means an extra $1,350 for this year. At the same time, our growing economy continues to create jobs and that has brought unemployment down to just 4.5 percent. These numbers give all Americans a reason to celebrate: More people are working than ever before, and paychecks are going further than they used to.

When you decide how to spend your paycheck, you have to set priorities and live within your means. Congress needs to do the same thing with the money you send to Washington. That was one of the clear messages American voters sent in the midterm elections. And one of the best ways we can impose more discipline on Federal spending is by addressing the problem of earmarks.

Earmarks are spending provisions that are often slipped into bills at the last minute, so they never get debated or discussed. It is not surprising that this often leads to unnecessary Federal spending—such as a swimming pool or a teapot museum tucked into a big spending bill. And over the last decade, the Congressional Research Service reports that the number of earmarks has exploded—increasing from about 3,000 in 1996 to 13,000 in 2006. I respect Congress's authority over the public purse, but the time has come to reform the earmark process and dramatically reduce the number of earmarks.

Reforming earmarks is the responsibility of both political parties. Over the past year, the Republican Congress succeeded in eliminating virtually all earmarks for three major Cabinet Departments. And I'm pleased that Democratic leaders in Congress recently committed themselves to support reforms that would restore transparency and accountability to earmarks. For this year's budget, they pledged to maintain current levels of spending and not include any earmarks, and they agreed to a temporary moratorium on earmarks. This is a good start, but Congress needs to do much more. My administration will soon lay out a series of reforms that will help make earmarks more transparent, that will hold the Members who propose earmarks more accountable, and that will help reduce the number of earmarks inserted into large spending bills.

Republicans and Democrats alike have an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to spending restraint and good government by making earmark reform a top priority for the next Congress. When it comes to spending your money, you expect us to rise above party labels. By working together to cut down on earmarks, we can show the American people that we can be fiscally responsible with their money and that we can come together in Washington to get results.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:40 a.m. on December 15 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December

16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 15 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa 2006

December 8, 2006

I send greetings to those observing Kwanzaa.

During the seven days of Kwanzaa leading up to the New Year, friends and family come together in a spirit of love and joy to honor their rich African heritage, reflect on the Seven Principles, and give thanks for the blessings of freedom and opportunity. Forty years after the first Kwanzaa, this hopeful occasion remains an opportunity to build the bonds of family, community, and culture and move ever closer to the founding promise of liberty and justice for all.

Our Nation is a better place because of the contributions African Americans have made to our strength and character over the generations. As you gather to celebrate your ancestry this Kwanzaa, I encourage you to take pride in your many achievements and look to the future with confidence in your abilities and faith in a brighter tomorrow.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa and a blessed New Year.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Memorandum on Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

December 15, 2006

Presidential Determination No. 2007–09

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 7(a) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104–45)(the "Act"), I hereby determine that it is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in sections 3(b) and 7(b) of the Act. My Administration remains committed to beginning the process of moving our Embassy to Jerusalem.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, accompanied by a report in accordance with section 7(a) of the Act, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

This suspension shall take effect after transmission of this determination and report to the Congress.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World

December 15, 2006

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped armed forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support

of the war on terror, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

THE WAR ON TERROR

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, and Southern Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the U.S. right to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time either the precise scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. Approximately 10,400 U.S. personnel also are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. This number is higher than that stated in the last report because in late October 2006 additional U.S. forces were reassigned to ISAF. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 21,000. The U.N. Security Council authorized the ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently, for a 12-month period from October 13, 2006, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1707 of September 12, 2006. The mission of the ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows reconstruction and the reestablishment of Afghan authorities. Currently, all 26 NATO nations contribute to the ISAF. Eleven non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to the ISAF.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the approximately 435 enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, the Security Council, noting the Iraqi government's request to retain the presence of the MNF, extended the MNF mandate for a period ending on December 31, 2006. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 of November 28, 2006, the Security Council extended the MNF mandate until December 31, 2007. Under Resolutions 1546, 1637, and 1723, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to security and stability in Iraq, as reconstruction continues. These contributions have included assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces and institutions as the Iraqi people drafted and approved a constitution and established a constitutionally elected government. The U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 134,000 military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, our friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped and combat-support forces to assist

in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region, and the U.S. forces headquarters element in Djibouti provides command and control support as necessary for military operations against al-Qaida and other international terrorists in the Horn of Africa region, including Yemen. In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

NATO-LED KOSOVO FORCE (KFOR)

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The mission of KFOR is to provide an international security presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (which is now Serbia); enforce the terms of the Undertaking on Demilitarization and Transformation of the former Kosovo Liberation Army; provide day-to-day operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, there are 24 NATO nations contributing to KFOR. Eleven non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is about 1,700 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 11 percent of KFOR's total strength of approximately 16,000 personnel. The U.S. forces have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment remains the primary military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. The KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels; provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside; and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence.

In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK continues to transfer additional competencies to the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which includes the President, Prime Minister, multiple ministries, and the Kosovo Assembly. The UNMIK retains ultimate authority in some sensitive areas such as police, justice, and ethnic minority affairs.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO has adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans. The UNMIK international police and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have full responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have begun to assume responsibility for guarding patrimonial sites and established border-crossing checkpoints. The KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as needed.

NATO HEADQUARTERS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Pursuant to the June 2004 decision made by NATO Heads of State and Government, and in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1575 of November 22, 2004, NATO concluded its Stabilization Force operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and established NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo to continue to assist in implementing the Peace Agreement in conjunction with a newly established European Force. The NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo, to which approximately 100 U.S. personnel are assigned, is, with the European Force, the legal successor to SFOR. The principal tasks of NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo are providing advice

on defense reform and performing operational supporting tasks, such as counterterrorism and supporting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ted Stevens, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18.

Remarks on Signing the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006

December 18, 2006

Thank you all. Welcome; please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House. Today I have the honor of signing a bill that will strengthen the partnership between the world's two largest democracies. The relationship between the United States and India has never been more vital, and this bill will help us meet the energy and security challenges of the 21st century. I want to thank the Congress for delivering this historic bill to my desk. I'm look forward to signing it.

The Henry Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act passed with strong bipartisan support. It is a fitting tribute to its sponsor and the man whose name it carries. During his 32 years in Congress, Chairman Hyde earned the respect of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I appreciate his effective and principled leadership. I wish him all the very best in his retirement.

I'm proud to be joined here by Secretary of State Condi Rice. This bill would not have happened without her leadership. I thank very much the Members of the Senate and the House who have joined us up here, people from both parties who worked hard to get this bill passed: Senator Bill Frist and Senator Dick Lugar and Senator George Allen; Congressman Gary Ackerman; Frank Pallone; Joe Crowley; Thad McCotter. Thank you all for joining us. Thanks for your good work.

I appreciate our Ambassador, David Mulford, and wife, Jeannie, for joining us. Thanks for your good work, Ambassador. I'm also proud to be joined by Ambassador Jassal. I want to thank you for coming, Ambassador.

I thank the Indian American community leaders who are here today. The Indian American community was vital to explaining this strategic bill to our fellow citizens. I appreciate so very much your carrying the message not only here at home but in India. And I want you to know that your voice was very effective, and I welcome it.

The United States and India are natural partners. The rivalries that once kept our nations apart are no more, and today, America and India are united by deeply held values. India is a democracy that protects rule of law and is accountable to its people. India is an open society that demands freedom of speech and freedom of religion. India is an important ally in the war against extremists and radicals. Like America, India has suffered from terrorist attacks on her own soil. And like America, India is committed to fighting the extremists, defeating their hateful ideology, and advancing the cause of human liberty around the world.

The United States and India are working together to expand economic opportunities in both our countries. India's economy has more than doubled in size since 1991, and it is one of the fastest growing markets for American exports. If you visit India today, you are going to see a lot of people using goods and services made by American companies, and that helps raise the standard of living not only in India but here at home. Trade is good for both countries, and we're going to continue to work with India to promote free and fair trade.

In our meetings in Washington and in New Delhi, Prime Minister Singh, for whom I have a lot of respect—we discussed the importance of working together to meet the energy needs of our growing economies. We recognize that energy, clean energy is going to be important to the advancement of our economies. And on my visit to India earlier this year, we concluded an historic agreement that will allow us to share civilian nuclear technology and bring India's civilian nuclear program under the safeguards of the IAEA. This cooperation will help the people of India produce more of their energy from clean, safe nuclear power, and that, in turn, will help their economy grow. And it's in our interest that the Indian economy continue to grow. It helps make America more secure.

As part of the agreement, the United States and India have committed to take a series of steps to make nuclear cooperation a reality, and we're going to fulfill these commitments. The bill I sign today is one of the most important steps, and it's going to help clear the way for us to move forward with this process. The bill is going to help us achieve four key goals.

First, the bill will help us strengthen cooperation between India and United States on one of the most important challenges in the 21st century, and that is energy. India is now the world's fifth largest consumer of energy, and its demand for electricity is expected to double by 2015. The United States has a clear interest in helping India meet this demand with nuclear energy. By helping India expand its use of safe nuclear energy, this bill lays the foundation for a new strategic partnership between our two nations that will help ease India's demands for fossil fuels and ease pressure on global markets.

Second, the bill will help promote economic growth. This bill helps open a new important market for American businesses by paving the way for investment in India's civilian nuclear industry for the first time ever. This new trade will help American companies gain new customers abroad and create new jobs here at home.

Third, the bill will help make it possible for India to reduce emissions and improve its environment. Today, India produces nearly 70 percent of its electricity from coal. Burning coal produces air pollution and greenhouse gases, and as India's economy has grown, emission levels have risen as well. We must break the cycle, and with nuclear power, we can. We can help India do so, and we can do so here at home by the use of nuclear power.

Nuclear power is the one source of energy that can generate massive amounts of electricity without producing any air pollution or greenhouse gases. And by sharing advanced civilian nuclear technology, we will help our friend India meet its growing demand for energy and lower emissions at the same time.

Finally, the bill will help keep America safe by paving the way for India to join the global effort to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. India has conducted its civilian nuclear energy program in a safe and responsible way for decades. Now, in return for access to American technology, India has agreed to open its civilian nuclear power program to international inspection. This is an important achievement for the whole world. After 30 years outside the system, India will now operate its civilian nuclear energy program under internationally accepted guidelines, and the world is going to be safer as a result.

The bill I'm about to sign is evidence of the growing bonds of trust between our two countries. Congress acted quickly and passed it with overwhelming bipartisan support. You know why? Because the American people have come to see India as a friend. And I view the Prime Minister as a trustworthy man and a friend. I appreciate Prime Minister Singh's leadership on this very important issue. I look forward to continuing to work with him to make civil nuclear cooperation a reality.

And now it is my honor to sign the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:46 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to India's Ambassador to the U.S. Raminder Singh Jassal; and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. H.R. 5682, approved December 18, was assigned Public Law No. 109–401.

Statement on Signing the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006

December 18, 2006

Today I have signed into law H.R. 5682, an Act containing the "Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006." The Act will strengthen the strategic relationship between the United States and India and deliver valuable benefits to both nations.

Section 103 of the Act purports to establish U.S. policy with respect to various international affairs matters. My approval of the Act does not constitute my adoption of the statements of policy as U.S. foreign policy. Given the Constitution's commitment to the presidency of the authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, the executive branch shall construe such policy statements as advisory. Also, if section 104(d)(2) of the Act were construed to prohibit the executive branch from transferring or approving the transfer of an item to India contrary to Nuclear Suppliers Group transfer guidelines that may be in effect at the time of such future transfer, a serious question would exist as to whether the provision unconstitutionally delegated legislative power to an international body. In order to avoid this constitutional question, the executive branch shall construe section 104(d)(2) as advisory. The executive branch will give sections 103 and 104(d)(2) the due weight that comity between the legislative and executive branches should require, to the extent consistent with U.S. foreign policy.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act that mandate, regulate, or prohibit submission of information to the Congress, an international organization, or the public, such as sections 104, 109, 261, 271, 272, 273, 274, and 275, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to protect and control information that could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 18, 2006.

NOTE: H.R. 5682, approved December 18, was assigned Public Law No. 109–401. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Robert M. Gates as Secretary of Defense in Arlington, Virginia

December 18, 2006

Thank you all. I'm pleased to join you here at the Pentagon. We're here to congratulate Bob Gates on becoming our Nation's 22d Secretary of the Defense.

Bob Gates entered public service 40 years ago. He is an experienced and thoughtful leader. He has got a track record of steering large organizations through change and transformation. I know Bob Gates will be an outstanding Secretary of the Defense.

I want to thank Bob's wife, Becky, and their family and their many friends who are with us here today. I appreciate the fact that the Vice President is here to administer the oath. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet who have joined us in welcoming a new member to the Cabinet. I appreciate so very much Senator John Warner and Senator Carl Levin for joining us. I thank the other Members of the United States Congress who are with us today, not the least of whom is my Congressman, Chet Edwards, from central Texas. [*Laughter*] I suspect he's here because of the Texas A&M connection. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Deputy Secretary England for joining us. I thank Dr. Harvey and Dr. Winter and Michael Wynne, Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, for joining us here today. I appreciate so very much General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and his wife, Lynne, as well as the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I thank our distinguished guests.

Most importantly, I thank those who wear our uniform. This has got to be an exciting

time for Bob Gates. I can't tell you what an honor it is to be the Commander in Chief of unbelievably fine people, and I suspect he will share that same sense of enthusiasm as the Secretary of the Defense.

The job of Secretary of Defense is one of the most important positions in our Government. The Secretary must understand the challenges of the present and see the threats of the future and find the best ways to prepare our Armed Forces to meet them.

We are a nation at war. And I rely on our Secretary of Defense to provide me with the best possible advice and to help direct our Nation's Armed Forces as they engage the enemies of freedom around the world. Bob Gates is the right man to take on these challenges. He'll be an outstanding leader for our men and women in uniform, and he's going to make our Nation proud.

Bob is a man of vision, integrity, and extensive experience. In 1966, Bob began his rise from an entry-level position at the Central Intelligence Agency to become its director. During his years of public service, Bob Gates has worked under six Presidents from both parties. He spent nearly 9 years at the White House working on the National Security Council staff. He's amassed nearly 30 years of experience in national security matters. Bob Gates's lifetime of preparation will serve him well as the Secretary of Defense.

Bob follows a superb leader at the Department of Defense. For nearly 6 years, Don Rumsfeld has served with exceptional strength and energy at a time of challenge and change, and he produced impressive results. During his tenure, he developed a new defense strategy, established a new command structure of our Armed Forces, helped transform the NATO Alliance, took ballistic missile defense from theory to reality, and undertook the most sweeping transformation of America's global defense posture since the start of the cold war. He led our Armed Forces with determination and distinction. And on Friday at the Pentagon, the men and women he led showed their admiration and devotion to him. I want to thank Don Rumsfeld for his service, and I wish him and his family all the very best.

As Bob Gates raises his hand and takes the oath of office, he does so at a time of great consequence for our Nation. He knows the stakes in the war on terror. He recognizes this is a long struggle against an enemy unlike any our Nation has fought before. He understands that defeating the terrorists and the radicals and the extremists in Iraq and the Middle East is essential to leading toward peace.

As Secretary of Defense, he will help our country forge a new way forward in Iraq so that we can help the Iraqis achieve our shared goal of a unified democratic Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself and be an ally in our struggle against extremists and radicals.

Bob Gates is a talented and innovative leader who brings a fresh perspective to the Department of Defense. I'm pleased that he's answered the call to serve our Nation again. He has my trust and my confidence, and he has the gratitude and the prayers of the American people.

And so I look forward to working with Bob Gates. I congratulate you, sir. I appreciate you taking on this job. And now I'm going to ask the Vice President to administer the oath of office for our Nation's 22d Secretary of Defense.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. at the Pentagon. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary of Defense Gates. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah

December 18, 2006

Thank you all very much. Welcome to the White House. I'm pleased you all could join us. I appreciate members of my Cabinet who have joined us: Secretary Michael Chertoff, Ambassador Susan Schwab, and Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten.

Tonight is the fourth night of Hanukkah, a holiday which commemorates a victory for freedom and the courage and faith that made it possible. Laura and I are honored to have this Hanukkah menorah here at the White House. It's a symbol that the White House

is the people's house, and it belongs to Americans of all faiths.

The story of Hanukkah celebrates a great miracle. More than 2,000 years ago, the land of ancient Israel was conquered, its most sacred temple was desecrated, and Jews were forbidden to practice their faith. A patriot named Judah Maccabee and his followers took a stand for freedom and rose up against their oppressors to take back Jerusalem.

When the Maccabees returned to reclaim their holy temple, the oil that should have lasted only one day burned for 8. That miraculous light brought hope. And today, by lighting the menorah, Jews around the world celebrate the victory of light over darkness and give thanks for the presence of a just and loving God.

We're honored to have a beautiful menorah here from Lisa and Alan Stern of Los Angeles. The ceramic plaques around the base feature biblical scenes of the Hanukkah story. And between the menorah branches are painted doves, which represent the eternal wish for peace.

I want to thank Ariel Cohen and her family for being here. Ariel, you did a wonderful job of saying the Hanukkah blessings and lighting the candles. I also thank the Indiana University's Hillel HooShir Choir for your wonderful performance. We're really glad you came. Thanks for coming.

On Hanukkah, we're especially mindful of the sacrifices that freedom requires. Our Nation is grateful to the men and women of every faith who serve our country in uniform and who are away from their families this holiday. We pray for them and their families, and we pray that those who still live in the darkness of tyranny will someday see the light of freedom.

The word "Hanukkah" means dedication, and the message of Hanukkah calls on us to dedicate ourselves to recognizing the miracles in our daily lives. This dedication has the power to lift our souls and to make us better people and to make the world a better place.

Laura and I wish all the people of the Jewish faith around the world a Happy Hanukkah, and thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. in the Bookseller's Area at the White House.

Message Sending Holiday Greetings to Members of the Armed Forces

December 18, 2006

To the Men and Women of the United States Armed Forces

On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I send our best holiday wishes to you and your families.

During this hopeful time of year, the hearts of Americans are filled with gratitude for the many blessings in our lives. We are especially thankful for the priceless gift of freedom that our Armed Forces help defend by serving the cause of peace and standing watch over our security. As courageous Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, you have set aside comfort and convenience to protect the rest of us, earning the respect of a grateful Nation and a proud Commander in Chief.

Many of you are confronting our adversaries abroad and observing the holidays in places far from home, but you are close to our hearts. You are serving at a time when our Nation needs you, and your fellow citizens appreciate the many sacrifices that you and your families are making every day. Over the holidays and throughout the New Year, we will continue to ask the Almighty to bestow His care on you and your loved ones.

Laura and I wish each of you a safe and joyous holiday season. May God bless and watch over you, and may God bless America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Message on the Observance of Christmas 2006

December 18, 2006

"For unto us a child is born . . . and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

For centuries, patient men and women listened to the words of prophets and lived in joyful expectation of the coming Messiah. Their patience was rewarded when a young virgin named Mary welcomed God's plan with great faith, and a quiet birth in a little town brought hope to the world. For more than two millennia, Christians around the world have celebrated Christmas to mark the birth of Jesus and to thank the Almighty for His grace and blessings.

In this season of giving, we also remember the universal call to love our neighbors. Millions of compassionate souls take time during the holidays to help people who are hurt, feed those who are hungry, and shelter those who need homes. Our Nation also thinks of the men and women of our military who are spending Christmas at posts and bases around the world and of the loved ones who pray for their safe return. America owes a debt of gratitude to our service members and their families.

The simple story of Christmas speaks to every generation and holds a sense of wonder and surprise. During this time of joy and peace, may we be surrounded by the love of family and friends and take time to reflect on the year ahead. Laura and I pray that this season will be a time of happiness in every home and a time of peace throughout the world. Merry Christmas.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Statement on Signing the Combating Autism Act of 2006

December 19, 2006

For the millions of Americans whose lives are affected by autism, today is a day of hope. The "Combating Autism Act of 2006" will increase public awareness about this disorder and provide enhanced Federal support for autism research and treatment. By creating a national education program for doctors and the public about autism, this legislation will help more people recognize the symptoms of autism. This will lead to early identification and intervention, which is critical for children with autism. I am proud to sign this bill into law and confident that it will serve as an important foundation for our Nation's efforts to find a cure for autism.

NOTE: S. 843, approved December 19, was assigned Public Law No. 109–416. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

The President's News Conference

December 20, 2006

The President. Thank you all. Good morning. This week I went to the Pentagon for the swearing-in of our Nation's new Secretary of Defense, Bob Gates. Secretary Gates is going to bring a fresh perspective to the Pentagon, and America is fortunate that he has agreed to serve our country once again. I'm looking forward to working with him.

Secretary Gates is going to be an important voice in the Iraq strategy review that's underway. As you know, I've been consulting closely with our commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the strategy in Iraq and on the broader war on terror. One of my top priorities during this war is to ensure that our men and women wearing the uniform have everything they need to do their job.

This war on terror is the calling of a new generation; it is the calling of our generation. Success is essential to securing a future of peace for our children and grandchildren, and securing this peace for the future is going to require a sustained commitment from the American people and our military.

We have an obligation to ensure our military is capable of sustaining this war over the long haul and performing the many tasks that we ask of them. I'm inclined to believe that we need to increase in the permanent size of both the United States Army and the United States Marines. I've asked Secretary Gates to determine how such an increase could take place and report back to me as quickly as possible.

I know many Members of Congress are interested in this issue, and I appreciate their input. As we develop the specifics of the proposals over the coming weeks, I will not only

listen to their views, we will work with them to see that this becomes a reality.

Two thousand and six was a difficult year for our troops and the Iraqi people. We began the year with optimism after watching nearly 12 million Iraqis go to the polls to vote for a unity government and a free future. The enemies of liberty responded fiercely to this advance of freedom. They carried out a deliberate strategy to foment sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shi'a. And over the course of the year, they had success. Their success hurt our efforts to help the Iraqis rebuild their country. It set back reconciliation; it kept Iraq's unity Government and our coalition from establishing security and stability throughout the country.

We enter this new year clear eyed about the challenges in Iraq and equally clear about our purpose. Our goal remains a free and democratic Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself and is an ally in this war on terror.

I'm not going to make predictions about what 2007 will look like in Iraq, except that it's going to require difficult choices and additional sacrifices, because the enemy is merciless and violent. I'm going to make you this promise: My administration will work with Republicans and Democrats to fashion a new way forward that can succeed in Iraq. We'll listen to ideas from every quarter. We'll change our strategy and tactics to meet the realities on the ground. We'll never lose sight that on the receiving end of the decisions I make is a private, a sergeant, a young lieutenant, or a diplomat who risks his or her life to help the Iraqis realize a dream of a stable country that can defend, govern, and sustain itself.

The advance of liberty has never been easy, and Iraq is proving how tough it can be. Yet the safety and security of our citizens requires that we do not let up. We can be smarter about how we deploy our manpower and resources. We can ask more of our Iraqi partners, and we will. One thing we cannot do is give up on the hundreds of millions of ordinary moms and dads across the Middle East who want the hope and opportunity for their children that the terrorists and extremists seek to deny them, and that's a peaceful existence.

As we work with Congress in the coming year to chart a new course in Iraq and strengthen our military to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must also work together to achieve important goals for the American people here at home. This work begins with keeping our economy growing. As we approach the end of 2006, the American economy continues to post strong gains. The most recent jobs report shows that our economy created 132,000 more jobs in November alone, and we've now added more than 7 million new jobs since August of 2003. The unemployment rate has remained low at 4.5 percent. A recent report on retail sales shows a strong beginning to the holiday shopping season across the country—and I encourage you all to go shopping more.

Next year marks a new start with a new Congress. In recent weeks, I've had good meetings with the incoming leaders of Congress, including Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader-elect Harry Reid. We agreed that we've got important business to do on behalf of the American people and that we've got to work together to achieve results. The American people expect us to be good stewards of their tax dollars here in Washington. So we must work together to reduce the number of earmarks inserted into large spending bills and reform the earmark process to make it more transparent and more accountable.

The American people expect us to keep America competitive in the world. So we must work to ensure our citizens have the skills they need for the jobs of the future and encourage American businesses to invest in technology and innovation. The American people expect us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and increase our use of alternative energy sources. So we must step up our research and investment in hydrogen fuel cells, hybrid plug-in and battery-powered cars, renewable fuels like ethanol and cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel, clean coal technology, and clean sources of electricity like nuclear, solar, and wind power.

Another area where we can work together is the minimum wage. I support the proposed $2.10 increase in the minimum wage over a 2-year period. I believe we should do it in a way that does not punish the millions

of small businesses that are creating most of the new jobs in our country. So I support pairing it with targeted tax and regulatory relief to help these small businesses stay competitive and to help keep our economy growing. I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats to help both small-business owners and workers, when Congress convenes in January.

To achieve these and other key goals we need to put aside our partisan differences and work constructively to address the vital issues confronting our Nation. As the new Congress takes office, I don't expect Democratic leaders to compromise on their principles, and they don't expect me to compromise on mine. But the American people do expect us to compromise on legislation that will benefit the country. The message of the fall election was clear: Americans want us to work together to make progress for our country. And that's what we're going to do in the coming year.

And now I'll be glad to answer some questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Progress in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, less than 2 months ago at the end of one of the bloodiest months in the war, you said, "Absolutely we're winning." Yesterday you said, "We're not winning; we're not losing." Why did you drop your confident assertion about winning?

The President. My comments—the first comment was done in this spirit: I believe that we're going to win. I believe that—and by the way, if I didn't think that, I wouldn't have our troops there. That's what you got to know; we're going to succeed.

My comments yesterday reflected the fact that we're not succeeding nearly as fast as I wanted when I said it at the time and that conditions are tough in Iraq—particularly in Baghdad. And so we're conducting a review to make sure that our strategy helps us achieve that which I'm pretty confident we can do, and that is have a country which can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself.

You know, I—when I speak, like right now, for example—I'm speaking to the American people, of course, and I want them to know that I know how tough it is, but I also want them to know that I'm going to work with the military and the political leaders to develop a plan that will help us achieve the objective. I also want our troops to understand that we support them, that I believe that tough mission I've asked them to do is going to be accomplished, and that they're doing good work and necessary work.

I want the Iraqis to understand that we believe that if they stand up—step up and lead—and with our help, we can accomplish the objective. And I want the enemy to understand that this is a tough task, but they can't run us out of the Middle East, that they can't intimidate America. They think they can. They think it's just a matter of time before America grows weary and leaves, abandons the people of Iraq, for example. And that's not going to happen.

What is going to happen is we're going to develop a strategy that helps the Iraqis achieve the objective that the 12 million people want them to achieve, which is a government that can—a country that can sustain itself, govern itself, defend itself, a free country that will serve as an ally in this war against extremists and radicals.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

U.S. Military Forces in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. If you conclude that a surge in troop levels in Iraq is needed, would you overrule your military commanders if they felt it was not a good idea?

The President. That's a dangerous hypothetical question. I'm not condemning you; you're allowed to ask anything you want. Let me wait and gather all the recommendations from Bob Gates, from our military, from diplomats on the ground—I'm interested in the Iraqis' point of view—and then I'll report back to you as to whether or not I support a surge or not. Nice try.

Q. Would you overrule your commanders——

The President. The opinion of my commanders is very important. They are bright, capable, smart people whose opinion matters to me a lot.

Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

War on Terror Strategy/Iraqi Government

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You have reached out to both Sunni and Shi'a political leaders in recent weeks, and now there's word that the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani is supporting a moderate coalition in Iraq. Has the U.S. reached out to him? How important is he in the equation moving forward? And what do you say to people who say more troops in Iraq would increase the sectarian split and not calm things down?

The President. Well, I haven't made up my mind yet about more troops. I'm listening to our commanders; I'm listening to the Joint Chiefs, of course; I'm listening to people in and out of government; I'm listening to the folks on the Baker-Hamilton commission about coming up with a strategy that helps us achieve our objective. And so as I said to Caren—probably a little more harshly than she would have liked—hypothetical questions, I'm not going to answer them today. I'm not going to speculate out loud about what I'm going to tell the Nation, when I'm prepared to do so, about the way forward.

I will tell you we're looking at all options. And one of those options, of course, is increasing more troops. But in order to do so, there must be a specific mission that can be accomplished with more troops. And that's precisely what our commanders have said—as well as people who know a lot about military operations—and I agree with them that there's got to be a specific mission that can be accomplished with the addition of more troops before I agree on that strategy.

Secondly, whatever we do is going to help the Iraqis step up. It's their responsibility to govern their country. It's their responsibility to do the hard work necessary to secure Baghdad. And we want to help them.

Thirdly, I appreciate the fact that the Prime Minister and members of the Government are forming what you have called a moderate coalition, because it's becoming very apparent to the people of Iraq that there are extremists and radicals who are anxious to stop the advance of a free society. And therefore, a moderate coalition signals to the vast majority of the people of Iraq that we have a unity government. that we're willing to reconcile our differences and work together and, in so doing, will marginalize those who use violence to achieve political objectives.

And so we support the formation of the unity Government and the moderate coalition. And it's important for the leader Sistani to understand that's our position. He is a—he lives a secluded life, but he knows that we're interested in defeating extremism, and we're interested in helping advance a unity government.

Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News].

Situation in the Middle East/War on Terror

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. Your former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, advocated for a lighter, more agile military force. Have you now concluded that that approach was wrong?

The President. No, I strongly support a lighter, agile Army that can move quickly to meet the threats of the 21st century. I also supported his force posture review and recommendations to move forces out of previous bases that—you know, they were there for the Soviet threat, for example, in Europe. So he's introduced some substantive changes to the Pentagon, and I support them strongly.

However, that doesn't necessarily preclude increasing end strength for the Army and the Marines. And the reason why I'm inclined to believe this is a good idea is because I understand that we're going to be in a long struggle against radicals and extremists, and we must make sure that our military has the capability to stay in the fight for a long period of time. I'm not predicting any particular theater, but I am predicting that it's going to take awhile for the ideology of liberty to finally triumph over the ideology of hate.

I know you know I feel this strongly, but I see this—we're in the beginning of a conflict between competing ideologies, a conflict that will determine whether or not your children can live in peace. A failure in the Middle East, for example, or failure in Iraq or isolationism will condemn a generation of young Americans to permanent threat from overseas. And therefore, we will succeed in Iraq. And therefore, we will help young democracies when we find them—democracies like Lebanon, hopefully a Palestinian state

living side by side in peace with Israel, the young democracy of Iraq.

It is in our interest that we combine security with a political process that frees people, that liberates people, that gives people a chance to determine their own futures. I believe most people in the Middle East want just that. They want to be in a position where they can chart their own futures, and it's in our interest that we help them do so.

Jim [Jim Axelrod, CBS News].

Public Opinion on Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In the latest CBS News poll, 50 percent of Americans say they favor a beginning of an end to U.S. military involvement in Iraq; 43 percent said, "Keep fighting, but change tactics." By this and many other measures, there is no clear mandate to continue being in Iraq in a military form. I guess my question is: Are you still willing to follow a path that seems to be in opposition to the will of the American people?

The President. I am willing to follow a path that leads to victory, and that's exactly why we're conducting the review we are. Victory in Iraq is achievable. It hasn't happened nearly as quickly as I hoped it would have. I know it's—the fact that there is still unspeakable sectarian violence in Iraq, I know that's troubling to the American people. But I also don't believe most Americans want us just to get out now. A lot of Americans understand the consequences of retreat. Retreat would embolden radicals. It would hurt the credibility of the United States. Retreat from Iraq would dash the hopes of millions who want to be free. Retreat from Iraq would enable the extremists and radicals to more likely be able to have safe haven from which to plot and plan further attacks.

And so it's been a tough period for the American people. They want to see success, and our objective is to put a plan in place that achieves that success. I'm often asked about public opinion. Of course, I want public opinion to support the efforts. I understand that. But, Jim, I also understand the consequences of failure. And therefore, I'm going to work with the Iraqis and our military and politicians from both political parties to achieve success.

I thought the election said they want to see more bipartisan cooperation; they want to see us working together to achieve common objectives. And I'm going to continue to reach out to Democrats to do just that.

Sheryl [Sheryl Gay Stolberg, New York Times].

The Presidency/U.S. Military Casualties in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, Lyndon Johnson famously didn't sleep during the Vietnam war, questioning his own decisions. You have always seemed very confident of your decisions, but I can't help but wonder if this has been a time of painful realization for you as you yourself have acknowledged that some of the policies you hoped would succeed have not. And I wonder if you can talk to us about that.

The President. Yes, thanks.

Q. Has it been a painful time?

The President. The most painful aspect of my Presidency has been knowing that good men and women have died in combat. I read about it every night. My heart breaks for a mother or father, or husband or wife, or son and daughter; it just does. And so when you ask about pain, that's pain. I reach out to a lot of the families. I spend time with them. I am always inspired by their spirit. Most people have asked me to do one thing, and that is to make sure that their child didn't die in vain—and I agree with that—that the sacrifice has been worth it.

We'll accomplish our objective; we've got to constantly adjust our tactics to do so. We've got to insist that the Iraqis take more responsibility more quickly in order to do so.

But I—look, my heart breaks for them; it just does, on a regular basis.

Q. But beyond that, sir, do you question your own decisions?

The President. No, I haven't questioned whether or not it was right to take Saddam Hussein out, nor have I questioned the necessity for the American people—I mean, I've questioned it; I've come to the conclusion it's the right decision. But I also know it's the right decision for America to stay engaged and to take the lead and to deal with these radicals and extremists and to help support young democracies. It's the calling of

our time, Sheryl. And I firmly believe it is necessary.

And I believe the next President, whoever the person is, will have the same charge, the same obligations to deal with terrorists so they don't hurt us and to help young democracies survive the threats of radicalism and extremism. It's in our Nation's interest to do so. But the most painful aspect of the Presidency is the fact that I know my decisions have caused young men and women to lose their lives.

McKinnon [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

National Economy/Legislative Agenda

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You mentioned a need earlier to make sure that U.S. workers are skilled, that U.S. businesses keep investing in technology. You also mentioned that you want targeted tax and regulatory relief for small businesses in the coming year. Can you describe those ideas a little more? And also, can we really afford new tax breaks at this point, given the cost of the war on terrorism?

The President. John, the first question all of us here in Washington ask is, how do we make sure this economy continues to grow? A vibrant economy is going to be necessary to fund not only war but a lot of other aspects of our Government. We have shown over the past 6 years that low taxes have helped this economy recover from some pretty significant shocks. After all, the unemployment rate is 4.5 percent and 7 million more Americans have been—have found jobs since August of 2003. And we cut the deficit in half a couple of years in advance of what we thought would happen.

The question that Congress is going to have to face, and I'm going to have to continue to face is, how do we make sure we put policy in place to encourage economic growth in the short term, and how do we keep America competitive in the long term?

Part of the competitive initiative, which I have been working with Congress on, recognizes that education of young—of the young is going to be crucial for remaining competitive. And that's why the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind is going to be an important part of the legislative agenda going forward in 2007.

I also spoke about energy in my opening remarks. In my judgment, we're going to have to get off oil as much as possible to remain a competitive economy, and I'm looking forward to working with Congress to do just that. I'm optimistic about some of the reports I've heard about new battery technologies that will be coming to the market that will enable people who—people to drive the first 20 miles, for example, on electricity—that will be the initial phase—and then up to 40 miles on battery technologies. That will be positive, particularly if you live in a big city. A lot of people don't drive more than 20 miles or 40 miles a day. And therefore, those urban dwellers who aren't driving that much won't be using any gasoline on a daily basis, and that will be helpful to the country.

I'm pleased with the fact that we've gone from about a billion gallons of ethanol to over 5 billion gallons of ethanol in a very quick period of time. It's mainly derived from corn here in the United States. But there's been great progress, and we need to continue to spend money on cellulosic ethanol. That means that new technologies that will enable us to use wood chips, for example, or switch grass as the fuel stocks for the development of new types of fuels that will enable American drivers to diversify away from gasoline.

I spent a lot of time talking about nuclear power, and I appreciate the Congress's support on the comprehensive energy bill that I signed. But nuclear power is going to be an essential source, in my judgement, of future electricity for the United States and places like China and India. Nuclear power is renewable, and nuclear power does not emit one greenhouse gas. And it makes a lot of sense for us to share technologies that will enable people to feel confident that the nuclear powerplants that are being built are safe, as well as technologies that will eventually come to fore that will enable us to reduce the wastes, the toxicity of the waste, and the amount of the waste.

I'm going to continue to invest in clean coal technologies. We've got an abundance of coal here in America, and we need to be able to tell the American people we're going

to be able to use that coal to generate electricity in environmentally friendly ways.

My only point to you is, we've got a comprehensive plan to achieve the objective that most Americans support, which is less dependency upon oil.

I think it's going to be very important, John, to keep this economy growing—short term and long term—by promoting free trade. It's in our interest that nations treat our markets, our goods and services the way we treat theirs. And it's in our interest that administrations continue to promote more opening up markets. We've had a lot of discussions here in this administration on the Doha round of WTO negotiations. And I'm very strongly in favor of seeing if we can't reach an accord with our trading partners and other countries around the world to promote—to get this round completed so that free trade is universal in its application.

Free trade is going to be good for producers of U.S. product and services, but free trade is also going to be the most powerful engine for development around the world. It's going to help poor nations become wealthier nations. It's going to enable countries to be able to find markets for their goods and services so that they can better grow their economies and create prosperity for their people.

So we've got a robust agenda moving forward with the Congress, and I'm looking forward to working with them. And there are a lot of places where we can find common ground on these important issues.

Elaine [Elaine Quijano, Cable News Network].

CIA Employee Identity Disclosure Investigation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. This week we learned that Scooter Libby——

The President. A little louder, please. Excuse me—getting old. [*Laughter*]

Q. I understand, Mr. President.

The President. No, you don't understand. [*Laughter*]

Q. You're right, I don't.

This week, sir, we learned that Scooter Libby's defense team plans to call Vice President Cheney to testify in the ongoing CIA leak case. I wonder, sir, what is your reaction to that? Is that something you'll resist?

The President. I read it in the newspaper today, and it's an interesting piece of news. And that's all I'm going to comment about an ongoing case. I thought it was interesting.

Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News].

Mary Cheney

Q. Thank you, sir. Mary is having a baby. And you have said that you think Mary Cheney will be a loving soul to a child. Are there any changes in the law that you would support that would give same-sex couples greater access to things such as legal rights, hospital visits, insurance, that would make a difference, even though you've said it's your preference—you believe that it's preferable to have one man-one woman——

The President. I've always said that we ought to review law to make sure that people are treated fairly.

On Mary Cheney, this is a personal matter for the Vice President and his family. I strongly support their privacy on the issue, although there's nothing private when you happen to be the President or the Vice President—I recognize that. And I know Mary, and I like her. And I know she's going to be a fine, loving mother.

Baker [Peter Baker, Washington Post], I'm not going to call on you again. You got too much coverage yesterday, you know? [*Laughter*] Created a sense of anxiety amongst—no, no, you handled yourself well though.

Don [Don Gonyea, National Public Radio].

Iran/Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. A question about the Iraq Study Group Report. One of the things that it recommends is greater dialog, direct talks with Syria and Iran. James Baker himself, Secretary of State under your father, says that it's a lot like it was during the cold war when we talked to the Soviet Union. He says it's important to talk to your adversaries. Is he wrong?

The President. Let me start with Iran. We made it perfectly clear to them what it takes to come to the table, and that is a suspension of their enrichment program. If they

verifiably suspend—that they've stopped enrichment, we will come to the table with our EU–3 partners and Russia and discuss a way forward for them. Don, it should be evident to the Iranians, if this is what they want to do.

I heard the Foreign Minister—I read the Foreign Minister say the other day that, "Yes, we'll sit down with America, after they leave Iraq." If they want to sit down with us, for the good of the Iranian people, they ought to verifiably suspend their program. We've made that clear to them. It is obvious to them how to move forward.

The Iranian people can do better than becoming—than be an isolated nation. This is a proud nation with a fantastic history and tradition. And yet they've got a leader who constantly sends messages to the world that Iran is out of step with the majority of thinkers, that Iran is willing to become isolated—to the detriment of the people.

I mean, I was amazed that, once again, there was this conference about the Holocaust that heralded a really backward view of the history of the world. And all that said to me was, is that the leader in Iran is willing to say things that really hurts his country and further isolates the Iranian people.

We're working hard to get a Security Council resolution. I spoke to Secretary Rice about the Iranian Security Council resolution this morning. And the message will be that you—"you," Iran—are further isolated from the world.

My message to the Iranian people is: You can do better than to have somebody try to rewrite history. You can do better than somebody who hasn't strengthened your economy. And you can do better than having somebody who's trying to develop a nuclear weapon that the world believes you shouldn't have. There's a better way forward.

Syria—the message is the same. We have met with Syria since I have been the President of the United States. We have talked to them about what is necessary for them to have a better relationship with the United States, and they're not unreasonable requests. We've suggested to them that they no longer allow Saddamists to send money and arms across their border into Iraq to fuel the violence—some of the violence that we see. We've talked to them about—they've got to leave the democrat Lebanon alone.

I might say—let me step back for a second—I'm very proud of Prime Minister Siniora. He's shown a lot of tenacity and toughness in the face of enormous pressure from Syria as well as Hizballah, which is funded by Iran.

But we made it clear to them, Don, on how to move forward. We've had visits with the Syrians in the past. Congressmen and Senators visit Syria. What I would suggest, that if they're interested in better relations with the United States, that they take some concrete, positive steps that promote peace as opposed to instability.

Knoller [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Investigations of Internal Leaks

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President, did you or your Chief of Staff order an investigation of the leak of the Hadley memo before your meeting with Prime Minister al-Maliki? And if the leak wasn't authorized, do you suspect someone in your administration is trying to undermine your Iraq policy or sabotage your meeting with Prime Minister al-Maliki a few weeks back?

The President. I'm trying to think back if I ordered an investigation. I don't recall ordering an investigation. I do recall expressing some angst about ongoing leaks. You all work hard to find information and, of course, put it out for public consumption, and I understand that. But I don't appreciate those who leak classified documents. And it's an ongoing problem here, it really is—not just for this administration, but it will be for any administration that is trying to put policy in place that affects the future of the country.

And we've had a lot of leaks, Mark, as you know, some of them out of the—I don't know where they're from, and therefore, I'm not going to speculate. It turns out you never can find the leaker. It's an advantage you have in doing your job. We can moan about it, but it's hard to find those inside the Government that are willing to give, in this case, Hadley's document to newspapers.

You know, there may be an ongoing investigation of this; I just don't know. If there is—if I knew about it, it's not fresh in my mind. But I do think that at some point in

time, it would be helpful if we can find somebody inside our Government who is leaking materials, clearly against the law, that they be held to account. Perhaps the best way to make sure people don't leak classified documents is that there be a consequence for doing so.

Jim [Jim Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times].

Iraq/War on Terror Strategy

Q. Mr. President, if we could return to the reflexive vein we were in a little while ago——

The President. The what? Excuse me.

Q. Reflexive—reflective.

The President. Reflective stage.

Q. Part of the process of looking at the way forward could reasonably include considering how we got to where we are. Has that been part of your process? And what lessons—after 5 years now of war, what lessons will you take into the final 2 years of your Presidency?

The President. Look, absolutely, Jim, that it is important for us to be successful going forward is to analyze that which went wrong. And clearly, one aspect of this war that has not gone right is the sectarian violence inside Baghdad—a violent reaction by both Sunni and Shi'a to each other that has caused a lot of loss of life as well as some movements in neighborhoods inside of Baghdad. It is a troubling, very troubling, aspect of trying to help this Iraqi Government succeed. And therefore, a major consideration of our planners is how to deal with that and how to help—more importantly, how to help the Iraqis deal with sectarian violence.

There are a couple of theaters inside of Iraq, war theaters. One, of course, is Baghdad, itself, where the sectarian violence is brutal. And we've got to help them. We've got to help the Maliki Government stop it and crack it and prevent it from spreading, in order to be successful.

I fully understand—let me finish. Secondly, is the battle against the Sunnis, Sunni extremists—some of them Saddamists; some of there are Al Qaida—but all of them aiming to try to drive the United States out of Iraq before the job is done. And we're making good progress against them. It's hard fighting. It's been hard work, but our special ops teams, along with Iraqis, are on the hunt and bringing people to justice.

There's issues in the south of Iraq, mainly Shi'a-on-Shi'a tensions. But primarily, the toughest fight for this new Government is inside of Baghdad. Most of the deaths, most of the violence is within a 30-mile radius of Baghdad, as well as in Anbar Province. In other words, a lot of the country is moving along positively. But it's this part of the fight that is getting our attention. And frankly, we have—it has been that aspect of the battle, toward a government which can defend and govern itself and be an ally in the war on terror that—where we have not made as much progress as we'd have hoped to have made.

Listen, last year started off as an exciting year with the 12 million voters. And the attack on the Samarra mosque was Zarqawi's successful attempt to foment this sectarian violence. And it's mean. It is deadly, and we've got to help the Iraqis deal with it.

Success in Iraq will be success—there will be a combination of military success, political success, and reconstruction. And they've got to go hand in hand. That's why I think it's important that the moderate coalition is standing up. In other words, it's the beginning of a political process that I hope will marginalize the radicals and extremists who are trying to stop the advance of a free Iraq. That's why the oil law is going to be a very important piece of legislation.

In other words, when this Government begins to send messages that we will put law in place that help unify the country, it's going to make the security situation easier to deal with. On the other hand, without better, stronger security measures, it's going to be hard to get the political process to move forward. And so it's—we've got a parallel strategy. So when you hear me talking about the military—I know there's a lot of discussion about troops, and there should be—but we've got to keep in mind we've also got to make sure we have a parallel political process and a reconstruction process going together concurrently with a new military strategy.

I thought it was an interesting statement that Prime Minister Maliki made the other day about generals, former generals in the

Saddam army, that they could come back in or receive a pension. In other words, he's beginning to reach out in terms of a reconciliation plan that I think is going to be important.

I had interesting discussions the other day with Provincial Reconstruction Team members in Iraq. These are really brave souls who work for the State Department that are in these different provinces helping these provincial governments rebuild and to see a political way forward. And one of the things that—most of these people were in the Sunni territory, that I had talked to, and most of them were very anxious for me to help them and help the Iraqi Government put reconciliation plans in place. There's a lot of people trying to make a choice as to whether or not they want to support a government or whether or not their interest may lay in extremism. And they understand that a political process that is positive, that sends a signal, "We want to be a unified country," will help these folks make a rational choice.

And so it's a multifaceted plan. And absolutely, we're looking at where things went wrong, where expectations were dashed, and where things hadn't gone the way we wanted them to have gone.

Let's see here—Julie [Julie Hirschfeld, Baltimore Sun].

Legislative Agenda/Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You said this week that your microphone has never been louder on some of the key domestic priorities you've talked about, particularly Social Security and immigration. Your use of the Presidential microphone hasn't yielded the results that you wanted. So I'm wondering—the Democratic Congress, at this point, Republicans no longer controlling things on Capitol Hill—why you think your microphone is any louder, and how you plan to use it differently to get the results that you're looking for?

The President. Yes, microphone being loud means—is that I'm able to help focus people's attentions on important issues. That's what I was referring to. In other words, the President is in a position to speak about priorities. Whether or not we can get those priorities done is going to take bipartisan cooperation, which I believe was one of the lessons of the campaigns.

I will tell you, I felt like we had a pretty successful couple of years when it comes to legislation. After all, we reformed Medicare; we put tax policy in place that encouraged economic growth and vitality; we passed trade initiatives; passed a comprehensive energy bill. I'm signing an important piece of legislation today that continues a comprehensive approach to energy exploration, plus extenders on R&D, for example, tax credits. It's been a pretty substantial legislative record if you carefully scrutinize it.

However, that doesn't mean necessarily that we are able to achieve the same kind of results without a different kind of approach. After all, you're right, the Democrats now control the House and the Senate. And therefore, I will continue to work with their leadership—and our own leaders, our own Members—to see if we can't find common ground on key issues like Social Security or immigration.

I strongly believe that we can and must get a comprehensive immigration plan on my desk this year. It's important for us because, in order to enforce our border, in order for those Border Patrol agents who we've increased down there and given them more equipment and better border security, they've got to have help and a plan that says, "If you're coming into America to do a job, you can come legally for a temporary basis to do so."

I don't know if you've paid attention to the enforcement measures that were taken recently where in some of these packing plants they found people working that had been here illegally, but all of them had documents that said they were here legally. They were using forged documents, which just reminded me that the system we have in place has caused people to rely upon smugglers and forgers in order to do work Americans aren't doing.

In other words, it is a system that is all aimed to bypass no matter what measures we take to protect this country. It is a system that, frankly, leads to inhumane treatment of people. And therefore, the best way to deal with an issue that Americans agree on—that is, that we ought to enforce our borders in

a humane way—is we've got to have a comprehensive bill.

And I have made a proposal. I have spoken about this to the Nation from the Oval Office. I continue to believe that the microphone is necessary to call people to action. And I want to work with both Republicans and Democrats to get a comprehensive bill to my desk. It's in our interest that we do this.

In terms of energy, there's another area where I know we can work together. There is a consensus that we need to move forward with continued research on alternative forms of energy. I've just described them in my opening comments, and be glad to go over them again if you'd like, because they're positive. It's a positive development. We're making progress, and there's more to be done.

So, I'm looking forward to working with them. There's a lot of attitude here that says, "Well, you lost the Congress, therefore, you're not going to get anything done." Quite the contrary; I have an interest to get things done. And the Democrat leaders have an interest to get something done to show that they're worthy of their leadership roles. And it is that common ground that I'm confident we can get—we can make positive progress, without either of us compromising principle.

And I know they don't—I know they're not going to change their principles, and I'm not going to change mine. But nevertheless, that doesn't mean we can't find common ground to get good legislation done. That's what the American people want. The truth of the matter is, the American people are sick of the partisanship and name-calling.

I will do my part to elevate the tone, and I'm looking forward to working with them. It's going to be an interesting new challenge. I'm used to it, as Herman [Ken Herman, Cox News] can testify. I was the Governor of Texas with Democrat leadership in the house and the senate, and we were able to get a lot of constructive things done for the State of Texas. And I believe it's going to be possible here—to do so here in the country.

Michael [Michael Allen, Time].

President's Legacy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Merry Christmas.

The President. Thank you. Yes.

Q. I've just two questions related to the amazing fact that a quarter of your Presidency lies ahead. First, I keep reading that you'll be remembered only for Iraq, and I wonder what other areas you believe you're building a record of transformation you hope will last the ages. And second, a followup on Julie's question, what is your plan for either changing your role or keeping control of the agenda at a time when Democrats have both Houses on the Hill, and when the '08 candidates are doing their thing?

The President. Well, one is to set priorities. That's what I've just done, setting a priority. My message is: We can work together. And here are some key areas where we've got to work together, reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, minimum wage. I hope we're able to work together on free trade agreements. We can work together on Social Security reform and Medicare reform, entitlement reform. We need to work together on energy, immigration, earmarks.

The leadership has expressed their disdain for earmarks; I support their disdain for earmarks. I don't like a process where it's not transparent, where people are able to slip this into a bill without any hearing or without any recognition of who put it in there and why they put it in there. It's just not good for the system, and it's not good for building confidence of the American people in our process or in the Congress.

The first part of the—oh, last 2 years. I'm going to work hard, Michael. I'm going to sprint to the finish, and we can get a lot done. And you're talking about legacy. Here—I know, look, everybody is trying to write the history of this administration even before it's over. I'm reading about George Washington still. My attitude is, if they're still analyzing number 1, 43 ought not to worry about it and just do what he thinks is right and make the tough choices necessary.

We're in the beginning stages of an ideological struggle, Michael. It's going to last a while. And I want to make sure this country is engaged in a positive and constructive way to secure the future for our children. And it's going to be a tough battle.

I also believe the Medicare reform—the first meaningful, significant health care reform that's been passed in a while—is making a huge difference for our seniors. No Child Left Behind has been a significant education accomplishment, and we've got to reauthorize it. We have proven that you can keep taxes low, achieve other objectives, and cut the deficit. The entrepreneurial spirit is high in this country, and one way to keep it high is to keep—let people keep more of their own money.

So there's been a lot of accomplishment. But the true history of any administration is not going to be written until long after the person is gone. It's just impossible for short-term history to accurately reflect what has taken place. Most historians, you know, probably had a political preference, and so their view isn't exactly objective—most short-term historians. And it's going to take a while for people to analyze mine or any other of my predecessors until down the road when they're able to take—watch the long march of history and determine whether or not the decisions made during the 8 years I was President have affected history in a positive way.

I wish you all a happy holiday. Thank you for your attendance. Have fun. Enjoy yourself. For those lucky enough to go to Crawford, perhaps I'll see you down there.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10 a.m. in the Indian Treaty Room of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton, cochairs, Iraq Study Group; Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraqi Shiite Leader; Minister of Foreign Affairs Manuchehr Motaki and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon. A reporter referred to I. Lewis Libby, former Chief of Staff to the Vice President.

Remarks on Signing the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006

December 20, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House. In a few moments I'm going to sign a bill that will extend tax relief to millions of American families and small businesses and add momentum to a growing economy. The Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 will maintain key tax reforms, expand our commitment to renewable energy resources, make it easier for Americans to afford health insurance, and open markets overseas for our farmers and small-business owners.

This is a good piece of progrowth legislation, and I'm looking forward to signing it into law. And I appreciate members of my Cabinet who have joined me in thanking the Congress for their good work here at the end of this session. I want to thank Secretary of the Treasury Hank Paulson, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, and Ambassador Sue Schwab for joining us today. Thanks for your service.

I appreciate the Speaker for being here. Mr. Speaker, good piece of work. I thank you for your hard work at the end of the session. You deserve a lot of credit for this fine piece of legislation, as does Senator Bill Frist, Senate majority leader.

I appreciate key Members of the Senate and the House, who got this piece of legislation passed, for joining us today. I want to thank Pete Domenici and Mike DeWine and Rick Santorum for the Senate—I'm going to save the Louisianans here for a minute—and I want to thank the chairman, Bill Thomas, for not only this bill but a lot of other good pieces of legislation we were able to work together on.

I want to say something about these Louisianans. I appreciate them coming. This is a really important piece of legislation for Louisiana for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is, it will help provide money so that we can help restore the wetlands in Louisiana. It's an issue that has united the people of Louisiana. People are rightly concerned about the evaporation of wetlands, and this bill is going to help deal with that important issue. And I want to thank Mary and David Vitter for good work on this important bill. Congratulations. Texas people kind of like Louisianans. [*Laughter*] A lot of us spent some of our youth in Louisiana. [*Laughter*]

As we approach the end of 2006, our economy is strong, it's productive, and it's prosperous. The most recent jobs report shows that our economy created 132,000 new jobs in November. That's good. We have added more than 7 million new jobs since August of 2003—more than Japan and the European Union combined.

The unemployment rate has remained low at 4.5 percent. More Americans are finding work, and more American workers are taking home bigger paychecks. The latest figures show that real hourly wages increased 2.3 percent in the last year. For the typical family of four with both parents working, that means an extra $1,350 for this year.

As we look forward, our goal is to maintain progrowth economic policies that strengthen our economy and help raise the standard of living for all our citizens. The bill I sign today will continue important progress in four key ways. First, the bill will extend key tax relief measures that are critical to expanding opportunity, continuing economic growth, and revitalizing our communities.

To keep America competitive in the world economy, we must make sure our people have the skills they need for the jobs of the 21st century. Many of those jobs are going to require college, so we're extending the deductibility of tuition and higher education expenses to help more Americans go to college so we can compete.

And to keep our Nation leading the world in technology and innovation, we're extending and modernizing the research and development tax credit. By allowing businesses to deduct part of their R&D investments from their taxes, this bill will continue to encourage American companies to pursue innovative products, medicines, and technologies.

The bill will also extend vital provisions of the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act that I signed last year. The bill will keep in place key tax credits that we passed to help rebuild gulf coast communities that were devastated by the hurricanes that hit the region in 2005. It will allow us to maintain our commitment to provide a 50-percent bonus depreciation for Go Zone properties in the hardest hit areas. It will encourage businesses to build new structures and purchase new equipment in Mississippi and Louisiana.

There is a great spirit of entrepreneurship on the gulf coast, and the incentives in this bill will help our fellow citizens help revive those communities. It's in our Nation's interest that this piece of legislation pass, and it's in our interest that the people of the gulf coast recover as quickly as possible.

Secondly, this bill will help expand and diversify energy supplies. The bill will increase America's energy security by reducing dependence on foreign sources of energy. And that's a key goal of the Advanced Energy Initiative that my administration has laid out. To encourage the development of new sources of energy, the bill will extend tax credits for investment in renewable electricity resources, including wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal energy. It will encourage the development of clean coal technology and renewable fuels like ethanol. And it will help promote new energy efficient technologies that will allow us to do more with less. In other words, it encourages conservation.

Meeting the needs of our growing economy also requires expanding our domestic production of oil and natural gas. If we want to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil and gas, it is best we find some here at home. This bill will allow access to key portions of America's Outer Continental Shelf so we can reach more than 1 billion additional barrels of oil and nearly 6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

By developing these domestic resources in a way that protects our environment, we will help address high energy prices, we'll protect American jobs, and we'll reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

The bill will help open new markets for American goods and services around the world. I believe in free and fair trade. I believe free and fair trade is in the interests of the working people of this country. The bill authorizes permanent normal trade relations with Vietnam. And, Mr. Ambassador, thanks for joining us.

Vietnam will join the World Trade Organization in January. Isn't that amazing? I think it is. You'd be amazed at what it's like to be in Vietnam; Laura and I just returned. You were there, Mr. Ambassador. You saw the outpouring of affection for the American

people. There's amazing changes taking place in your country as your economy has opened up. Vietnam is demonstrating a strong commitment to economic reform, and I believe that's going to encourage political reform and greater respect for human rights and human dignity.

With this bill, America will broaden our trade relations with Vietnam. It's going to help the Vietnamese people build a strong economy that's going to raise their standards of living. It's in our interest to help those who struggle. It's in the interest of the United States to promote prosperity around the world, and the best way to do so is through opening up markets and free and fair trade.

The bill is going to extend a series of programs with other developing nations to give duty-free status to products they export to the United States. By encouraging exports, we're going to help nations in sub-Sahara Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America develop their economies and ultimately create new markets for U.S. goods and services.

Trade is an engine of economic growth, and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the new Congress to open up markets for U.S. farmers and manufacturers and service providers, and provide new opportunities for people around the world, and help eliminate poverty.

Fourth, the bill will help make health care affordable and accessible for more Americans. This bill strengthens health savings accounts, which we created in 2003. These accounts allow people to save money for health care tax free and to take their health savings accounts with them if they move from job to job. So far, an estimated 3.6 million HSAs have been opened in America.

To encourage even more people to sign up for HSAs, the bill will raise contribution limits and make accounts more flexible. It will let people fund their HSAs with one-time transfers from their IRA accounts. It will allow them to contribute up to an annual limit of $2,850, regardless of the deductible for their insurance plan.

We'll give them the option to fully fund their HSAs regardless of what time of year they sign up for the plan. These changes will bring health savings accounts within the reach of more of our citizens and ensure that more Americans can get the quality care they deserve.

With all these steps, we're working to improve the health and prosperity of the American people and to keep our economy growing. We're going to continue to support wise policies that encourage and enhance the entrepreneurial spirit in America, so this country of ours can remain the economic leader in the world.

I want to thank the Members of Congress for joining us. I appreciate the members of my Cabinet. It's now my honor to sign the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana; and Vietnam's Ambassador to the U.S. Nguyen Tam Chien. H.R. 6111, approved December 20, was assigned Public Law No. 109–432.

Statement on Signing the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006

December 20, 2006

Today I have signed into law H.R. 6111, the "Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006." The Act prevents tax increases that would have taken effect in the absence of the Act, facilitates effective use of health savings accounts, makes available natural resources of the outer continental shelf, and strengthens American laws in support of free trade.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act, including section 406(c)(2) in Division A and section 203(b) in Division B, that call for executive branch officials to submit legislative recommendations to the Congress, in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for congressional consideration such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient.

The executive branch shall construe as advisory provisions of the Act that purport to require concurrence of State officials as a precondition to execution of the laws, including section 415(b) of the Surface Mining

Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 as amended by section 207 in Division C and section 311(d) in Division C, as is consistent with the Constitution's vesting in the President of the executive power and the duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act, including section 4005(b) in Division D and section 213A(f) of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act as amended by section 5002 in Division D, that purport to make consultation with committees of Congress a precondition to execution of the law, to call for but not mandate such consultation, as is consistent with the Constitution's provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 20, 2006.

NOTE: H.R. 6111, approved December 20, was assigned Public Law No. 109–432.

Statement on Signing the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act

December 20, 2006

Today I have signed into law H.R. 6407, the "Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act." The Act is designed to improve the quality of postal service for Americans and to strengthen the free market for delivery services.

The executive branch shall construe sections 3662 and 3663 of title 39, United States Code, as enacted by section 205 of the Act, not to authorize an officer or agency within the executive branch to institute proceedings in Federal court against the Postal Regulatory Commission, which is another part of the executive branch, as is consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and the constitutional limitation of Federal courts to deciding cases or controversies.

The executive branch shall construe subsection 409(h) of title 39, as enacted by section 404 of the Act, which relates to legal representation for an element of the executive branch, in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

The executive branch shall construe section 407 of title 39, as enacted by section 405 of the Act, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, including the authority to determine which officers shall negotiate for the United States and toward what objectives, to make treaties by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

The executive branch shall construe subsections 202(a) and 502(a) of title 39, as enacted by subsections 501(a) and 601(a) of the Act, which purport to limit the qualifications of the pool of persons from whom the President may select appointees in a manner that rules out a large portion of those persons best qualified by experience and knowledge to fill the positions, in a manner consistent with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. The executive branch shall also construe as advisory the purported deadline in subsection 605(c) for the making of an appointment, as is consistent with the Appointments Clause.

The executive branch shall construe subsection 404(c) of title 39, as enacted by subsection 1010(e) of the Act, which provides for opening of an item of a class of mail otherwise sealed against inspection, in a manner consistent, to the maximum extent permissible, with the need to conduct searches in exigent circumstances, such as to protect human life and safety against hazardous materials, and the need for physical searches specifically authorized by law for foreign intelligence collection.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the Act that call for executive branch officials to submit legislative recommendations to the Congress in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for congressional consideration such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient. Such provisions include subsection 504(d) and section 2009 of title 39, as amended by section

603 of the Act, and sections 701(a)(2), 702(b), 703(b), 708(b), and 709(b)(2) of the Act.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 20, 2006.

NOTE: H.R. 6407, approved December 20, was assigned Public Law No. 109–435.

Executive Order 13419—National Aeronautics Research and Development

December 20, 2006

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 204 of the National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act of 1976, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6613), section 101(c) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–155), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *National Aeronautics Research and Development Policy.* Continued progress in aeronautics, the science of flight, is essential to America's economic success and the protection of America's security interests at home and around the globe. Accordingly, it shall be the policy of the United States to facilitate progress in aeronautics research and development (R&D) through appropriate funding and activities of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State, territorial, tribal, local, and foreign governments, international organizations, academic and research institutions, private organizations, and other entities, as appropriate. The Federal Government shall only undertake roles in supporting aeronautics R&D that are not more appropriately performed by the private sector. The National Aeronautics Research and Development Policy prepared by the National Science and Technology Council should, to the extent consistent with this order and its implementation, guide the aeronautics R&D programs of the United States through 2020.

Sec. 2. *Functions of the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.* To implement the policy set forth in section 1 of this order, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (the "Director") shall:

(a) review the funding and activities of the Federal Government relating to aeronautics R&D;

(b) recommend to the President, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the heads of executive departments and agencies, as appropriate, such actions with respect to funding and activities of the Federal Government relating to aeronautics R&D as may be necessary to

(i) advance United States technological leadership in aeronautics;

(ii) support innovative research leading to significant advances in aeronautical concepts, technologies, and capabilities;

(iii) pursue and develop advanced aeronautics concepts and technologies, including those for advanced aircraft systems and air transportation management systems, to benefit America's security and effective and efficient national airspace management;

(iv) maintain and advance United States aeronautics research, development, test and evaluation infrastructure to provide effective experimental and computational capabilities in support of aeronautics R&D;

(v) facilitate the educational development of the future aeronautics workforce as needed to further Federal Government interests;

(vi) enhance coordination and communication among executive departments and agencies to maximize the effectiveness of Federal Government R&D resources; and

(vii) ensure appropriate Federal Government coordination with State, territorial, tribal, local, and foreign governments, international organizations, academic and research institutions, private organizations, and other entities.

Sec. 3. *Implementation of National Aeronautics Research and Development Policy.*

To implement the policy set forth in section 1 of this order, the Director shall:

(a) develop and, not later than 1 year after the date of this order, submit for approval by the President a plan for national aeronautics R&D and for related infrastructure, (the "plan"), and thereafter submit, not less often than biennially, to the President for approval any changes to the plan;

(b) monitor and report to the President as appropriate on the implementation of the approved plan;

(c) ensure that executive departments and agencies conducting aeronautics R&D:

(i) obtain and exchange information and advice, as appropriate, from organizations and individuals outside the Federal Government in support of Federal Government planning and performance of aeronautics R&D;

(ii) develop and implement, as appropriate, measures for improving dissemination of R&D results and facilitating technology transition from R&D to applications; and

(iii) identify and promote innovative policies and approaches that complement and enhance Federal Government aeronautics R&D investment; and

(d) report to the President on the results of the efforts of executive departments and agencies to implement paragraphs (c)(i) through (iii) of this section.

Sec. 4. *General Provisions.* (a) In implementing this order, the Director shall:

(i) obtain as appropriate the assistance of the National Science and Technology Council in the performance of the Director's functions under this order, consistent with Executive Order 12881 of November 23, 1993, as amended;

(ii) coordinate as appropriate with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and

(iii) obtain information and advice from all sources as appropriate, including individuals associated with academic and research institutions and private organizations.

(b) The functions of the President under subsection (c) of section 101 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005, except the function of designation, are assigned to the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. In performing these assigned functions, the Director shall, as appropriate, consult the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Transportation, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and other heads of executive departments and agencies as appropriate. The Director also shall ensure that all actions taken in the performance of such functions are consistent with the authority set forth in subsections (a) through (d) of section 6 of Executive Order 13346 of July 8, 2004.

(c) This order shall be implemented in a manner consistent with:

(i) applicable law, including section 102A(i) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended (50 U.S.C. 403–1(i)), and subject to the availability of appropriations; and

(ii) statutory authority of the principal officers of executive departments and agencies as the heads of their respective departments and agencies.

(d) This order shall not be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, and legislative proposals.

(e) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

The White House,

December 20, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:38 a.m., December 22, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 26.

Statement on Signing the National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization Act of 2006

December 21, 2006

Today I have signed into law H.R. 5076, the "National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization Act of 2006." The Act authorizes funding for the Board and makes adjustments to its authority and duties.

Section 2(a)(2) of the Act requires the Board to develop an operating plan for the National Transportation Safety Board Academy, obtain and respond to comments from a legislative agent regarding that plan, submit the plan to congressional committees with a description of modifications made in response to comments from the legislative agent, and then implement the plan within 2 years. The executive branch shall construe the provision in a manner consistent with the Constitution's provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws.

The executive branch shall construe section 1113(c) of title 49, United States Code, as amended by section 9(f) of the Act, which relates to the Board's review and comment or approval of documents submitted to the President, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or Congress, in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient.

The executive branch shall construe section 11(c) of the Act, relating to executive branch reports to the Congress concerning investigations of alleged criminal and fraudulent activities in connection with a specified project, in a manner consistent with the constitutional authorities of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties, including the conduct of investigations and prosecutions to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 21, 2006.

NOTE: H.R. 5076, approved December 21, was assigned Public Law No. 109–443. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Statement on Signing the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006

December 21, 2006

Today I have signed into law S. 2370, the "Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006." The Act is designed to promote the development of democratic institutions in areas under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority.

Section 2 of the Act purports to establish U.S. policy with respect to various international affairs matters. My approval of the Act does not constitute my adoption of the statements of policy as U.S. foreign policy. Given the Constitution's commitment to the presidency of the authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, the executive branch shall construe such policy statements as advisory. The executive branch will give section 2 the due weight that comity between the legislative and executive branches should require, to the extent consistent with U.S. foreign policy.

The executive branch shall construe section 3(b) of the Act, which relates to access to certain information by a legislative agent, and section 11 of the Act, which relates to a report on certain assistance by foreign countries, international organizations, or multilateral development banks, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information that could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

Section 620K(e)(2)(A) and 620L(b)(4)(B)(i) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as enacted by sections 2(b)(2) and 3(a) of the Act, purport to require the President to consult with committees of the Congress prior to exercising certain authority

granted to the President by sections 620K and 620L. Because the constitutional authority of the President to supervise the unitary executive branch and take care that the laws be faithfully executed cannot be made by law subject to a requirement to consult with congressional committees or to involve them in executive decisionmaking, the executive branch shall construe the references in the provisions to consulting to require only notification.

The executive branch shall construe section 7 of the Act, which relates to establishing or maintaining certain facilities or establishments within the jurisdiction of the United States, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, including the authority to receive ambassadors and other public ministers.

The executive branch shall construe as advisory the provisions of the Act, including section 9, that purport to direct or burden the conduct of negotiations by the executive branch with entities abroad. Such provisions, if construed as mandatory rather than advisory, would impermissibly interfere with the President's constitutional authorities to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, including protection of American citizens and American military and other Government personnel abroad, and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 21, 2006.

NOTE: S. 2370, approved December 21, was assigned Public Law No. 109–446. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Executive Order 13420—Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay

December 21, 2006

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the laws cited herein, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Statutory Pay Systems.* The rates of basic pay or salaries of the statutory pay systems (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 5302(1)), as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5303(a), are set forth on the schedules attached hereto and made a part hereof:

(a) The General Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5332(a)) at Schedule 1;

(b) The Foreign Service Schedule (22 U.S.C. 3963) at Schedule 2; and

(c) The schedules for the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs (38 U.S.C. 7306, 7404; section 301(a) of Public Law 102–40) at Schedule 3.

Sec. 2. *Senior Executive Service.* The ranges of rates of basic pay for senior executives in the Senior Executive Service, as established pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5382, are set forth on Schedule 4 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Sec. 3. *Certain Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Salaries.* The rates of basic pay or salaries for the following offices and positions are set forth on the schedules attached hereto and made a part hereof:

(a) The Executive Schedule (5 U.S.C. 5312–5318) at Schedule 5;

(b) The Vice President (3 U.S.C. 104) and the Congress (2 U.S.C. 31, and section 137 of Public Law 109–289, division B, as amended by section 7 of Public Law 109–383) at Schedule 6; and

(c) Justices and judges (28 U.S.C. 5, 44(d), 135, 252, and 461(a); section 140 of Public Law 97–92), at Schedule 7.

Sec. 4. *Uniformed Services.* Pursuant to section 601(a)–(c) of Public Law 109–364, the rates of monthly basic pay (37 U.S.C. 203(a)) for members of the uniformed services, as adjusted under 37 U.S.C. 1009, and the rate of monthly cadet or midshipman pay (37 U.S.C. 203(c)) are set forth on Schedule 8 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Sec. 5. *Locality-Based Comparability Payments.*

(a) Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 5304a, locality-based comparability payments shall be paid in accordance with Schedule 9 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

(b) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall take such actions as may be necessary to implement these payments and to publish appropriate notice of such payments in the *Federal Register*.

Sec. 6. *Administrative Law Judges.* The rates of basic pay for administrative law

judges, as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5372(b)(4), are set forth on Schedule 10 attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Sec. 7. *Effective Dates.* Rates for the Congress, under Schedule 6, are effective on February 16, 2007. Schedule 7 reflects continuation of the pay rates in effect as of the first day of the applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2006. Schedule 8 is effective on January 1, 2007. The other schedules contained herein are effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2007.

Sec. 8. *Prior Order Superseded.* Executive Order 13393 of December 22, 2005, is superseded.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 21, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:38 a.m., December 22, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order and the attached annexes will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 26.

Memorandum on Provision of Aviation Insurance Coverage for Commercial Air Carrier Service in Domestic and International Operations

December 21, 2006

Memorandum for the Secretary of Transportation

Subject: Provision of Aviation Insurance Coverage for Commercial Air Carrier Service in Domestic and International Operations

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including 49 U.S.C. 44302, *et seq.*, and 3 U.S.C. 301, I hereby:

1. determine that continuation of U.S.-flag commercial air service is necessary in the interest of air commerce, national security, and the foreign policy of the United States;

2. approve provision by the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) of insurance or reinsurance to U.S.-flag air carriers against loss or damage arising out of any risk from the operation of an aircraft in the manner and to the extent provided in Chapter 443 of 49 U.S.C.:

(a) until August 31, 2007;

(b) after August 31, 2007, but no later than December 31, 2007, when the Secretary determines that such insurance or reinsurance cannot be obtained on reasonable terms and conditions from any company authorized to conduct an insurance business in a State of the United States; and

3. delegate to the Secretary the authority vested in me by 49 U.S.C. 44306(c) to extend this determination for additional periods beyond August 31, 2007, but no later than December 31, 2007, when the Secretary finds that the continued operation of aircraft to be insured or reinsured is necessary in the interest of air commerce or the national security, or to carry out the foreign policy of the United States Government.

You are directed to bring this determination immediately to the attention of all air carriers within the meaning of 49 U.S.C. 40102(2), and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops at Walter Reed Army Medical Center

December 22, 2006

Laura and I are honored to be here to thank the folks working here at this service project. What you're seeing is some young kids wrapping gifts for children whose families are here in Washington, DC, as a result of an injury that they've received—that their parent received in combat.

We've also just come from Walter Reed. I got to tell you, it's a remarkable experience to go through the hospital. It's remarkable because of the unbelievable compassion and care of the people who work at Walter Reed. And it's also remarkable to me, these men and women who have volunteered to serve our country, who've received terrible wounds, but whose spirits are strong; their resolve is strong; and their dedication to our country remains strong.

I want all our fellow citizens to understand that we're lucky to have men and women who have volunteered to serve our country like those who wear our uniform. We're lucky to have their families support them so strongly. We owe them all we can give them—not only for when they're in harm's way but when they come home, to help them adjust if they have wounds or help them adjust after their time in service. We owe a huge debt of gratitude for incredible men and women. And I—every time I come to Walter Reed, I am moved by the courage and bravery of the people I meet.

And so on behalf of a grateful nation, I want to thank our military families, thank the folks here who are wrapping gifts for the military families, and ask for God's blessings on our citizens.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 16

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 18

In the morning, the President had breakfast with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Later, he had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

Later in the morning, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with Jewish higher education leaders.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Arlington, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

December 19

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, the President signed H.R. 6143, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act of 2006, and S. 3678, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with the Washington Post.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a photo opportunity with U.S. Ambassadors. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with White House Fellows.

In the evening, on the State Floor, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a holiday reception.

December 20

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to appoint John V. Cogbill III as a member of the National Capital Planning Commission and, upon appointment, designate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen J. Cassidy as a member of the Medal of Valor Review Board (Firefighting).

The President announced his intention to appoint M. Josephine Beach and Phillip M. Schofield as members of the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health.

The President announced the recess appointment of Warren Bell as a member of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The President announced the recess appointment of Wayne Cartwright Beyer as a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced the recess appointment of Mark McKinnon as a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

December 21

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 22

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, the President and

Mrs. Bush went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he presented Purple Heart medals to 14 soldiers. They then volunteered to wrap gifts for family members of wounded soldiers.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released December 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1472, H.R. 4246, H.R. 4720, H.R. 5108, H.R. 5736, H.R. 5857, H.R. 5923, H.R. 5989, H.R. 5990, H.R. 6078, H.R. 6102, H.R. 6151, S. 1219, S. 1820, S. 3759, S. 4050, and S. 4073

Fact sheet: Implementation of the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza: Six-Month Status Report

Fact sheet: The United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act

Released December 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5466, H.R. 6143, S. 843, and S. 3678

Fact sheet: The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act of 2006

Fact sheet: Combating Autism Act of 2006

Released December 20

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 394, H.R. 758, H.R. 854, H.R. 864, H.R. 1285, H.R. 1674, H.R. 4057, H.R. 4416, H.R. 4510, H.R. 4583, H.R. 5132, H.R. 5136, H.R. 5646, H.R. 6131, H.R. 6316, S. 1346, S. 1998, S. 3938, S. 4044, and S. 4046

Fact sheet: Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006

Released December 21

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1492, H.R. 3248, H.R. 6342, and H.R. 6429

Released December 22

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 101, S. 214, S. 362, S. 707, S. 895, S. 1096, S. 1378, S. 1529, S. 1608, S. 2125, S. 2150, S. 2205, S. 2653, S. 2753, S. 3421, S. 3546, S. 3821, S. 4042, S. 4091, S. 4092, and S. 4093

Acts Approved by the President

Approved December 18

H.R. 1472 / Public Law 109–397
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 167 East 124th Street in New York, New York, as the "Tito Puente Post Office Building"

H.R. 4246 / Public Law 109–398
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8135 Forest Lane in Dallas, Texas, as the "Dr. Robert E. Price Post Office Building"

H.R. 4720 / Public Law 109–399
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 Gateway Drive in Lincoln, California, as the "Beverly J. Wilson Post Office Building"

H.R. 5108 / Public Law 109–400
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1213 East Houston Street in Cleveland, Texas, as the "Lance Corporal Robert A. Martinez Post Office Building"

H.R. 5682 / Public Law 109–401
To exempt from certain requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 a proposed nuclear agreement for cooperation with India

H.R. 5736 / Public Law 109–402
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 101 Palafox Place in Pensacola, Florida, as the "Vincent J. Whibbs, Sr. Post Office Building"

H.R. 5857 / Public Law 109–403
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1501 South Cherrybell Avenue in Tucson, Arizona, as the "Morris K. 'Mo' Udall Post Office Building"

H.R. 5923 / Public Law 109–404
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 29–50 Union Street in Flushing, New York, as the "Dr. Leonard Price Stavisky Post Office"

H.R. 5989 / Public Law 109–405
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10240 Roosevelt Road in Westchester, Illinois, as the "John J. Sinde Post Office Building"

H.R. 5990 / Public Law 109–406
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 415 South 5th Avenue in Maywood, Illinois, as the "Wallace W. Sykes Post Office Building"

H.R. 6078 / Public Law 109–407
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 307 West Wheat Street in Woodville, Texas, as the "Chuck Fortenberry Post Office Building"

H.R. 6102 / Public Law 109–408
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 200 Lawyers Road, NW in Vienna, Virginia, as the "Captain Christopher P. Petty and Major William F. Hecker, III Post Office Building"

H.R. 6151 / Public Law 109–409
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 216 Oak Street in Farmington, Minnesota, as the "Hamilton H. Judson Post Office"

S. 1219 / Public Law 109–410
To authorize certain tribes in the State of Montana to enter into a lease or other temporary conveyance of water rights to meet the water needs of the Dry Prairie Rural Water Association, Inc.

S. 1820 / Public Law 109–411
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6110 East 51st Place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the "Dewey F. Bartlett Post Office"

S. 3759 / Public Law 109–412
To name the Armed Forces Readiness Center in Great Falls, Montana, in honor of Captain William Wylie Galt, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor

S. 4050 / Public Law 109–413
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 103 East Thompson Street in Thomaston, Georgia, as the "Sergeant First Class Robert Lee 'Bobby' Hollar, Jr. Post Office Building"

S. 4073 / Public Law 109–414
To designate the outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Farmington, Missouri, as the "Robert Silvey Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic"

Approved December 19

H.R. 6143 / Public Law 109–415
Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act of 2006

S. 843 / Public Law 109–416
Combating Autism Act of 2006

S. 3678 / Public Law 109–417
Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act

H.R. 5466 / Public Law 109–418
Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail Designation Act

Approved December 20

H.R. 394 / Public Law 109–419
To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a boundary study to evaluate the significance of the Colonel James Barrett Farm in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the suitability and feasibility of its inclusion in the National Park System as part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, and for other purposes

H.R. 758 / Public Law 109–420
To establish an interagency aerospace revitalization task force to develop a national strategy for aerospace workforce recruitment, training, and cultivation

H.R. 854 / Public Law 109–421
To provide for certain lands to be held in trust for the Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute Tribe

H.R. 864 / Public Law 109–422
Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act

H.R. 1285 / Public Law 109–423
Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Reauthorization Act of 2005

H.R. 1674 / Public Law 109–424
Tsunami Warning and Education Act

H.R. 4057 / Public Law 109–425
To provide that attorneys employed by the Department of Justice shall be eligible for compensatory time for travel under section 5550b of title 5, United States Code

H.R. 4416 / Public Law 109–426
To reauthorize permanently the use of penalty and franked mail in efforts relating to the location and recovery of missing children

H.R. 4510 / Public Law 109–427
To direct the Joint Committee on the Library to accept the donation of a bust depicting Sojourner Truth and to display the bust in a suitable location in the Capitol

H.R. 4583 / Public Law 109–428
Wool Suit Fabric Labeling Fairness and International Standards Conforming Act

H.R. 5132 / Public Law 109–429
River Raisin National Battlefield Study Act

H.R. 5136 / Public Law 109–430
National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006

H.R. 5646 / Public Law 109–431
To study and promote the use of energy efficient computer servers in the United States

H.R. 6111 / Public Law 109–432
Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006

H.R. 6131 / Public Law 109–433
To permit certain expenditures from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund

H.R. 6316 / Public Law 109–434
To extend through December 31, 2008, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities to expedite the processing of permits

H.R. 6407 / Public Law 109–435
Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act

S. 1346 / Public Law 109–436
Michigan Lighthouse and Maritime Heritage Act

S. 1998 / Public Law 109–437
Stolen Valor Act of 2005

S. 3938 / Public Law 109–438
Export-Import Bank Reauthorization Act of 2006

S. 4044 / Public Law 109–439
Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Clarification Act of 2006

S. 4046 / Public Law 109–440
Iraq Reconstruction Accountability Act of 2006

Approved December 21

H.R. 1492 / Public Law 109–441
To provide for the preservation of the historic confinement sites where Japanese

Americans were detained during World War II, and for other purposes

H.R. 3248 / Public Law 109–442
Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006

H.R. 5076 / Public Law 109–443
National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization Act of 2006

H.R. 6342 / Public Law 109–444
Veterans Programs Extension Act of 2006

H.R. 6429 / Public Law 109–445
Fallen Firefighters Assistance Tax Clarification Act of 2006

S. 2370 / Public Law 109–446
Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006

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